

Color Psychology and Online Marketing for Law Firms

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Color shapes our perception and mood. Most of us are aware of this in some capacity, especially if we have had [negative reactions](#) to retail or restaurant environments. Color psychology affects us all.

Color-Based Decision Making

Have you ever walked into a restaurant and immediately decided you didn't want to eat there based on the décor used and the "feel" of the dining area? You're not alone. According to the Institute for Color Research, "Within 90 seconds, consumers make an unconscious judgment of a product or environment. 60-90% of that judgment is based upon color."

Other research indicates that consumers experience their first impression of sight memory for products within 0.67 seconds. The first impression, which comes from colors, dominates 67% of the purchasing process (Chang and Lin).

These same principles of color-based-judgment apply to your Web presence. Using different colors can send unique messages to site visitors and shape their perception of your firm.

As the authors summarized in their article *Impact of Colors on the Psychology of Marketing*:

“[A]s a marketing tool, color can be a sublimely persuasive force; and as a functional component of human vision, color can capture attention, relax or irritate the eyes, and affect the legibility of the text and – All things put together, the right colors empower and contribute to the success of an advertising campaign, a product, a service, or even an interior space and in contrast wrong colors can be a costly mistake” (Singh and Srivastava).

Extensive research has been done on colors and the emotions and messages they convey. Before choosing colors to implement in your marketing, keep the following color characteristics in mind (see resources below for credits on this research).

Color Characteristics

Red –exciting, stimulating, dominant, powerful, protective, anxiety inducing, up-to-date, strong, confident, energetic, alive, vitality, healthy, enthusiastic, boldness, aggressive, angry, arousal, love, passion. Red has been shown to increase blood pressure, brain activity, respiratory rates, and frequency of eye blinks.

Orange –abundant, fun, warmth, lively, energetic, happy, sociable, novelty, youthful, physical comfort, warmth, security, powerful, determination, desire. Orange shares many attributes of red including arousal and excitement, but on a lesser level.

Yellow – optimism, confidence, self-esteem, extraversion, friendliness, creativity, happy, smiley, cheerful, warmth, joy, fresh, aware. Yellow is harsh to the eye from a physical perspective and should be used sparingly.

Green – harmony, equilibrium, peace, serene, balance, relaxation, health, security, hope, refreshment, nature, soothing, calm, neutral, comfortable, tender, fertility, envy, greed, sickness, satisfaction. When more yellow it becomes stimulating, lighter, and less serious; when it is more blue it becomes more refreshing, colder, and sensitive.

Blue – highly intellectual, communication, trust, efficiency, serenity, duty, logic, coolness, reflection, tender, calm, soothing, relaxing, peaceful, secure, comfort, contemplation, tranquility, dignity, depressed, sadness, trust, understanding, tradition, staidness, faithful, smooth, indifference. The majority of research on color preference finds blue to be the world’s favorite color.

Purple – spiritual, luxury, authenticity, regal, quality, dignified, exclusive, stately, mysterious, flamboyant, leadership, introspective, classic, glamour, sickness, sadness. When closer to red, purple conveys more sensuality and seductiveness; as it becomes lighter it becomes more intimate, cosmetic, and sweet.

Pink – nurturing, warm, soft, and feminine, physical tranquility, gentle, cheerful.

Brown – seriousness, warmth, nature, earthiness, reliability, support, comfort, powerful, strong, protective, heaviness, secure.

Black – sophistication, glamour, security, emotional safety, efficiency, substance, power, stateliness, dignity, status, elegance, richness, fashion, staidness, noble, mystery, wealth, sophistication, luxury, quality.

White – purity, cleanliness, simplicity, sophistication, efficiency, hygiene, clarity, peace, humility, innocence, heavens, happiness, tender, soothing, calm, serene, monotony, honor.

Grey – lack of confidence, dampness, depression, hibernation, lack of energy, boring, unemotional. Grey, being a neutral color, lacks many positive associations.

With these descriptions in mind, you can more effectively communicate your firm's personality and brand.

When using color on your site, be sure that whichever colors you choose are cohesive and work together with the design. For a shortcut, you can use [color personas as a guide](#).

Research from Loyola University indicated that using colors to manifest critical messages enhances attention by 82% and brand recognition by 80% (Chang and Lin). You should carefully choose which colors to use based on the traits that are most important for you to convey. Before finalizing your decision, consider if the traits and emotions of the colors you selected are consistent with the spirit of your law firm.

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